



New Survey Estimates Significant Redevelopment Jobs and Revenues

A new survey issued by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in June finds that redeveloping brownfields properties could generate more than 575,000 new jobs and as much as \$1.9 billion annually in new tax revenue for America's cities, which are facing tight budgets due to rising homeland security costs, state aid cuts, and a weak national economy.

According to the survey, 153 cities have already successfully redeveloped 922 sites, totaling 10,594 acres, and bringing in \$90 million in revenues to 45 cities and more than 83,000 jobs to 74 cities. However, projections based on survey responses suggest that the potential for job and revenue creation is far greater. The survey finds that 205 cities have 24,987 brownfields properties awaiting redevelopment. Of those, 148 cities reported that 576,373 new jobs and as much as \$1.9 billion annually could be generated if their brownfields properties were redeveloped.

The U.S. Government Accounting Office has estimated that there are 400,000 to 600,000 brownfields properties across the United States. While the survey examines only a fraction of the existing sites, it is the most detailed report documenting specific brownfields sites. The most frequently identified impediment to redevelopment of these sites is lack of clean-up funds (82 percent), liability issues (59 percent), and the need for environmental assessments (51 percent). Three-quarters of respondents said that additional resources are needed to attract greater private-sector investment.

Mayors have requested that Congress provide \$250 million in annual funding to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for brownfields assessment and cleanup. Congress is also currently considering creating two new funding streams at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Commerce to help prepare brownfields properties for redevelopment. This survey demonstrates that such funding would prove a highly effective investment in economic development and job creation in America's cities.

Since 1992, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has taken a national leadership role in raising and addressing the brownfields issue. Working closely with the business community, the Conference has identified and worked to address impediments to brownfields redevelopment.

The complete report can be downloaded at the U.S. Conference of Mayors' web site at http://www.usmayors.org/71stAnnualMeeting/brownfields_060903.asp.